

Uprightness and Integrity indispensably
requisite to attain and preserve a good
Conscience.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D in

St MART's Church

IN

BEVERLEY,

In the County of YORK;

On SUNDAY the Tenth Day of October
1731. in the Morning.

By CHRISTOPHER HILDYARD,
Chaplain to the late Right Honourable
HENRY Earl De Lorraine, and Rector of
Rowley near Beverley.

Published at the Request of the Right Worshipful ROBERT
WIDE, Esq; Mayor; the Mayor Elect; and several of
the Aldermen of the said Corporation:

And also of ELLERKER BRADSHAW, of Risby, Esq;
and other Gentlemen.

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To the Right Worshipful

ROBERT WRIDE, *Esq;*
the Mayor.

And to the Right Worshipful

JOHN JOHNSON, *Esq;*
the Mayor Elect.

GENTLEMEN,

I TAKE the Freedom to dedicate this Sermon which I preached before you; and at your desire, and of several others, I now publish; and request you'll accept of it, as an Acknowledgement of your many Civilities.

I might make use of this Opportunity of enlarging upon the Respect, Value, and Esteem you deserve, but, lest I should offend

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your

your Modesty, I forbear: Yet I cannot but
 own that it is a Pleasure to me to hear
 that others entertain as high an Opinion
 of your Uprightness and Integrity as I my-
 self do: Tho' I don't know I gave my Au-
 ditors any Occasion to imagine, that I was
 presenting them with your Characters,
 when I was only in general Terms de-
 scribing the upright Person's Behaviour in
 all Conditions and Circumstances of Life.
 I had no Design either to complement, or
 reflect upon any particular Persons; yet
 however their Mistake does you a great
 Honour. My Endeavour was to make my
 Sermon profitable and useful to my Hearers,
 and how far it promotes the good End I
 aim'd at, is left to the Consideration of the
 impartial Reader, who I hope will be fa-
 vourable in his Censure; since I did not
 compose it with an Intention to make it
 public, tho' at the earnest request of Friends
 it now appears in Print; so that it is less
 correct than otherwise it might have been:
 Yet, as it is, I am in hopes it may influence
 some

some to maintain their Integrity, and preserve their Consciences pure and undefiled.

MR MAYOR,

Your refusing, with disdain, a Bribe, the Morning you was going to elect an Alderman, may convince your Adversaries of the Integrity you have always professed, and prevent for the future any attempt against that Virtue.

I beg, Gentlemen, you'll pardon this Digression, which is in some measure necessary to justify myself, and to satisfy those, if any such there be, who fancy that I am partial.

That you may live many happy Days upon Earth, and continue to excite and encourage others by your good Examples to the constant Practice of the excellent Virtues recommended in this Discourse, and may at last attain everlasting Felicity is the hearty Prayer of,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble Servant

Chr. Hildyard.

[III]

to maintain their dignity, and to
show their Country in the best light.

The Mayor

Dear Sir, I have the honor to
acknowledge the receipt of your letter
of the 10th inst. and in reply to
inform you that the same has been
forwarded to the proper authorities
for their consideration. I am, Sir,
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

I beg to inform you that the
same has been forwarded to the
proper authorities for their
consideration, and I am, Sir,
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
I am, Sir, Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
I am, Sir, Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
I am, Sir, Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
I am, Sir, Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
I am, Sir, Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant

Chas. Hibbard

J O B XXvii. 5, 6.

— *'Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*



SUPPOSE we are all of us so well acquainted with the Holy Scripture, as to understand by whom these Words were spoken: But if we were ignorant of his Character, we could not but conclude, from this rational and brave Resolution, that he was a Person of eminent Virtue: Especially if we consider the heavy Afflictions he laboured under, and his being assaulted with the ungrateful Teasings and Upbraidings of his miserable Comforters, whose Conduct was so mighty odd, as to render them proverbial ever since.

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He baffled their erroneous Opinion, that it is impossible for a Man to be afflicted who is sincerely religious and virtuous, and appealed, from their unmerciful Partiality, to a more just Tribunal; when this did not silence their unjust Resolutions, he contented himself with protesting his Sincerity, by resolving to maintain it.

'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me.

My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

In discoursing upon these Words I shall endeavour to shew,

First, The inestimable Value of a good Conscience, both in respect of this World and the next.

Secondly, I shall give you a short Description of Integrity, which is the Means to attain and preserve it.

Thirdly, I shall take notice of some of the Enemies and Underminers of it.

Fourthly, and lastly, I shall shew that it highly concerns us to watch against them, as we tender our temporal and eternal Welfare.

In treating upon each of these Particulars I shall presume to take a little more Liberty than the Proposition would perhaps nicely allow, that I may take as much as conveniently I can, within the Compass I am confined to. And,

First, Let us consider the Value of a good Conscience, both in respect of this World and the next.

To teach Man the way to Happiness hath been the constant Aim and Design of Reason and Philosophy, but so unsuccessful have all their Attempts and Endeavours been, that it is difficult to determine whether the Desire of injoying it, or the Despair of finding it were more universal.

It cannot indeed be denied, but that ingenious Moralists have devised very handsome and plausible Refuges for the Troubles to which they found themselves obnoxious: But the Wit of their pretty Conjectures is much more admirable, than their Use or Solidity.

So that to teach the Way to Happiness is a Task which natural Reason cannot pretend to undertake without Presumption, or perform without much Imperfection; to relieve therefore the Infirmities of Nature, we must have recourse to Reveal'd Religion, which assures us that if we believe and practise what it enjoyns, we shall, at the end of this mortal Life, be received into

a State of everlasting Happiness. There is nothing but the Divine Power and Assistance can give us a real inward Peace and Tranquility of Mind.

And, in order to attain this, we must consult the Holy Scriptures to see what the Terms of the Covenant are, which as Christians, we are obliged to observe and keep, and we find that Repentance towards GOD, and Faith in our Lord JESUS CHRIST are the indispensable Conditions of it.

That some entertain erroneous Opinions concerning these fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion, is what will be so long as *Passion* and *Prejudice* prevail in the World; but if our Repentance be a thorough Conversion from Sin to GOD, and if our Faith be a firm Dependance upon GOD's Mercies, thro' the Merits and Mediation of CHRIST JESUS our Saviour, we have GOD's Promise, in almost every Page of the Gospel, for our Comfort and Security.

And being fully assured of this, the next thing we have to do, is to try our Title by a special Application to ourselves. Do we thus believe and repent, as is required of us? examine yourselves whether ye be in the Faith: *Brethren if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards GOD.* These and several other Places in Holy Scripture plainly demonstrate, that

that we may pass a true Judgement upon ourselves if we please, but if Men will be partial or superficial in their Reflections, it is at their own peril. *If a Man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself; But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another.* Gal. vi. 3, 4.

The best Teste in this Case, is our good Works; we should consider impartially whether we have conscientiously performed, or neglected our Duty. *He that doth righteousness is born of GOD*: If then our Devotion be frequent and fervent, if our Temper be meek and humble, if our Conversation be courteous and obliging, if we be just and honest in our Dealings with others, and charitable according to our Ability; if we be not only just, but good and merciful, and sincerely endeavour after a truly Christian Perfection; if we have the Courage to defend true Religion and Virtue, and scorn to compliment or connive at Vice and Irreligion, we need not fear, as Men without Hope, but may, with an humble Confidence, justly expect a glorious Immortality, since he is faithful that has promised.

It is a Comfort and Satisfaction inexpressibly great, to have all our Debts cancell'd, and our Sins buried in Oblivion,
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to be troubled with no Reflections upon what is past, nor dismay'd at the Prospect of what is to come; to have our Hopes of Heaven ratified here, and with Joy to expect the Completion of them hereafter. But this is not all :

The sincerely religious Person hath a Promise and interest in this Life, as well as in that which is to come. He is, in a good Measure, freed from the Passions and Follies of a corrupt Nature, and takes care to create himself no unnecessary Disturbances; by his Sincerity he effectually provides against what the Atheist attempts in vain, the Dread of an invisible Power; he is never forced to have recourse to Wine or Company to silence his Conscience, and he finds more real Satisfaction in living up to the Rules of Religion and Virtue, than the Honours and Preferments of the Proud and Ambitious can afford them.

The Deportment of the pious Person when he is under Affliction is so decent and raking, as to eclipse the Prosperity of the wicked, and to render the Sufferings of the one preferable to the Enjoyments of the other. But this is considering him under a Cloud and at Disadvantage; let us also contemplate him under prosperous Occurrences, and we may see him triumphing over the World, and boasting of God
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all the Day long, having his Thoughts fixed upon Heaven, and the everlasting Happiness he shall there partake of. What a vast Difference is there betwixt his real Comforts, and the sham Delights and Pleasures of the sensual Person? which are all of them vain, and can never afford them any true Satisfaction. So that it is Religion only and a good Conscience *whose ways are ways of pleasantness and whose paths are peace.* God is so kind to us as to make our Happiness depend not upon Fortune, but our own Endeavours accompanied with his gracious Aid and Assistance, and the most compendious way of attaining it, is by preserving our Innocence, and keeping our Integrity; a short Description of which was the second Thing I proposed.

Now this, according to the Apostle's comprehensive Epitome of Religion, consists in living righteously, soberly, and godly; faithfully discharging our Duty, as Christians, towards God, our Neighbour, and ourselves.

In respect of God, the upright Man is decent and regular, conformable to all the Rules and Precepts of Revealed Religion, and the natural Principles of Morality. He courageously withstands Temptations, and defies the Malice of the Devil and his emissaries, to divert his good Resolutions
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And notwithstanding the Hurry and Distraction, the Noise and Bustle of the World, his Thoughts are calm and easie, and he cannot be diverted either by Allurements or Threatnings, from the charming Objects of Heaven, and it's never ending Happiness. He will not suffer his generous Nature to submit to what it ought to command, and he *scorns to prostitute a good Conscience to raise or encrease an Estate, or to please and humour a Friend.* To know that it is his Duty to do a Thing ends all Disputes; for he allows of no Commutation for Obedience.

In a Word, he is careful and diligent in the Performance of every thing which he knows he ought to do, is pious and religious, devout and serious, confesses and bewails his Infirmities and Imperfections, earnestly and humbly begs Pardon for all his Sins and Transgressions, and uses his utmost Endeavours to avoid them for the future. This is his Deportment towards God.

To Man, he is courteous and affable, humble and obliging, true and faithful, be he Friend or Enemy; in public or private, present or absent; he is sure of the same Justice and Fidelity. His Words and Intentions observe a perfect Union and Harmony, and never jarr or disagree; he hates Subterfuges and Evasions, wishes his
Thoughts

Thoughts open and transparent, and all the World Witnesses to his most secret Contrivances. He makes no Advantage of any one's Ignorance or Necessity, but observes the Golden Rule of doing as he would be done to. He stifles ill Reports, instead of dispersing them, and is deaf to the Impertinences of unthinking Chatt. So staunch is his Virtue, and so vigorous his Spirit, *that, upon a just Occasion, he dare speak the Truth, tho' confronted by Persons in Power and Authority.* It was not the Greatness of *Fælix* could restrain St *Paul's* freedom of Discourse; but he made the Judge tremble while the Prisoner remained calm and unconcerned. He scorns to do any thing that shall stand in need of Concealment, or to lay at the Mercy of another Man's Silence for his Quiet and Repose.

The upright Person, in respect of himself, is sober and temperate, chaste and pure, decent and regular, and qualifies himself as well as he can to discharge his Duties and Obligations to God and Man; and in acting thus he preserves his Conscience undefiled, and enjoys an uninterrupted Peace and Serenity in his own Mind: But of this Felicity there are several Enemies and Underminers, some of which I now proceed in the third Place to consider.

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And the first I shall mention, is the remembrance of our unrepented Sins. A Man must be at peace with GOD, before he can be at peace with himself, and therefore we must make it our first Endeavour to procure our Reconciliation with Almighty GOD: And tho' we cannot make Satisfaction ourselves, yet we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, who is the Propitiation for our Sins. To his Merits we must have recourse, and earnestly and humbly beg of Him to interpose on our Behalf, to mitigate the Divine Wrath, which by our many and great Sins and Offences, we have highly provoked.

Secondly, Afflictions do also very much disturb and interrupt our Peace and Tranquility, the Weight of which is sometimes mighty great and heavy to bear. When we are under an extraordinary Trouble or Sorrow, an Antidote wou'd be highly acceptable: But Earth must not pretend to redress what Heaven is pleased to inflict, and therefore all we can do, is to endeavour to alleviate what is not in our power wholly to remove. In order to this we must dispose ourselves patiently to bear those Afflictions which we cannot avoid, and by Prudence and Consideration, correct the too great Sorrow we at any time labour under. We should so familiarize the

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the Thoughts and Expectations of Afflictions as not to be much concerned when at any time they shall befall us. Such provident Forecast does no way contribute to the causing or hastning their coming, and if it should prove Labour in vain, it will be no ungrateful Disappointment. We know that the worst may happen. We know that Afflictions may fall to our Lot, and how then can we be secure that they shall not? A sudden Surprise does mightily affect us, many times makes Persons miserable, and sometimes causes them to despair.

But if it be too late for this Advice by their present Incumbency, we ought to consider who is the Author of them, and that his Almighty Power is directed by a most wise Providence, and tempered by a fatherly Love, and why then should we murmur or complain at his good Pleasure, to whom all created Beings submit and pay Obeisance? Afflictions rise not out of the Ground, but have their Commission and Limitation from above: All the Attempts in the World cannot alter or disannul, all the Powers of Hell cannot aggravate or augment them, without the Divine Permission; and is it not then a heinous Sin to provoke God Almighty by our unmannerly Clamours, and to find fault with the

Equity of his Judgements? Nay farther, the Assistance of a good Conscience will not make us only patient but chearful and couragious; for nothing daunts a Soul that is well prepared and has a due Sense of Religion upon it.

Above all, it is proof against the King of Terrors, Death itself, which is very terrible if we consider it only as it is the Separation of the Soul and Body: But to have not only the Dissolution of Life to fear, but that a State of endless Torments will ensue, how must it aggravate and increase the Dread of that melancholy Moment? If the Dislocation of one Member of the Body be so uneasy, as by Experience we find it is? What must it be to be always upon the Rack, and to undergo the most exquisite Torments? 'Tis the Policy of the Devil to hide from Men as long as he can, the Miseries which wicked Men suffer in the other State, least the Dread and Horrour of them should drive them to Repentance; but the firm and assured Hope of being happy for ever, supports the good Christian under the Pains and Agonies of Death: And while the Epicure trembles, the Guilty fears, and the Careless doubts, he desires *to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST*. Since then this depends upon our keeping a good Conscience;

Conscience; what remains, is that I proceed to the

Fourth, and last, which is indeed but a natural Consequence of the former Propositions.

That we be cautious and circumspect in this Point as we tender our temporal and eternal Welfare.

Holy *Job*, recollecting what Honour, Respect, and Reverence, he had paid him in the time of his Prosperity, attributes it to this, because he *delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him. Job xxix. 12, 13.* and so on. And indeed to place our Happiness in this World in any thing but the practice of Piety, Holiness, and Charity, is only to lay a Foundation for a vexatious Disappointment; for how should that render us secure, which has no Certainty it it's-self? The covetous Person may laugh at the Censures of the World upon the sight of his Bags; the Glutton may prefer a dainty Dish before a good and commendable Character, and the boon Companion think nothing comparable to a Glass of good Wine: But when any of these are wounded in their tender part, are under extremity of Pain, are sick or a dying, what

what do any of these insipid Trifles then signify? what Comfort can they afford them? So that we ought to place our Delight and Satisfaction in that alone, which is not subject to Uncertainties or Contingencies, and that is a good Correspondence betwixt God and our own Consciences; for if we be careful to secure God's Favour, we have no just Reason to fear any thing, since no Darkness can over shadow this Sun of Righteousness, no Cloud of Sorrow abide his glorious Presence. Let the World censure and revile, tho' Afflictions and Calamities should befall us, we should be unworthy the Favour of God, if the Divine Assistance could not enable us steadily to weather these Storms which at last will bring us to the Haven where we would be. If our own Hearts reproach us not we may justly have Confidence towards God, and safely depend upon it that we shall enjoy that Peace which passeth all Understanding.

To draw towards a Conclusion: To secure this, let us firmly resolve to do nothing but what we can justify both before God and Man. It cannot be deny'd, that the sensual Person hath Pleasures and Diversions, such as they are, more ready and nigher at hand than the Religious Person; but then they are only sham and counterfeit

feit Delights, and of a short and uncertain Duration: And tho' the Men of this World by their Insolence and Disingenuity, or by their Flattery, their baseness and meaness of Spirit, may sometimes gain their Point and attain the end they aim at; yet could a Beggar gain a Crown by such means, he would not deserve our Envy.

He only is the happy Man, who having secured the Divine Love by an universal Obedience, carries in some measure his Heaven in his own Breast; wherever he goes, he can see in every Feild enough of the Divine Wisdom to fill all the Powers of his Soul with a lasting Joy and Delight: Compared to this, how mean are the Thoughts of a past Night's Debauch, or the expecting ones of another? How fordid the Contemplation of many Bags? How empty all the Titles of Honour? No Man knows the Pleasure which accompanies a good Conscience but he who experiences it. 'Tis malicious Suggestion and false Slander which the wicked Men, throw upon the Christian Religion, that it is a mopish and melancholy Institution; for the true Reason why Men are sad and uneasy in their Minds, is because they have not Religion enough to balance their idle Thoughts and panic, which now and then invade

invade them. If they would but seriously devote themselves to Religion, they would slight and despise every thing else in comparison of it, and allow nothing to stand in competition with spiritual Delights.

Let us resolve all outward Occurrences into God's good Providence, and allow Him the best Judge of what is convenient; and then let the World toss as it will, and vary itself in Storms and Calms, our Rest we hope is placed above, out of the Reach and Sphere of changeable Mortality.

If then we be not in love with Misery and Vexation, if we be not obstinately resolved upon our own Ruin, let us employ all our Faculties in the effectual Search of that which alone can afford us real and lasting Satisfaction: And how then shall we slight the Evils, and condemn the worst that Men can do unto us? How shall we smile at the rough and unsteady Motions of this World? How shall Heaven and Earth look pleasantly upon us and we upon them; while we command the one and aspire to the other.

To Conclude. All this, and whatever else is necessary or convenient, pleasant or delightful, shall be our Portion, while we have the Courage to maintain this
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pious Resolution: *'Till I dye I will not remove my Integrity from me.*

My Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

To the Holy and ever Blessed TRINITY, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, three Persons, and one GOD, be ascribed by us, and all Mankind, All Honour, Glory, Power, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and ever, Amen.

F I N I S.



I will not
 leave my Integrity from me.
 The Righteous I hold fast, and will
 not let it go: my heart shall not reproach
 me so long as I live.

To the Holy and ever Blessed Trinity,
 the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY
 GHOST, three Persons, and one GOD, be
 ascribed Power, and all Honour, All
 glory, Glorious Power, Praise, Might, Ma-
 jesty, and Dominion, now and ever, Amen.



